

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF RAIL AND TRANSIT**

CONFERENCE REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: September 10, 2012

LOCATION OF MEETING: [Goffstown Rail Trail](#)



PARTICIPANTS:

Paula Bedard, Friends of the Goffstown Rail Trail (FGRT) Board, Regular Trail User
Peter Capano, City of Manchester, Chief of Parks and Recreation
Jessica Chambers, City of Manchester, Parks and Recreation
Warren Denby, FGRT, Regular Trail User
William Fisk, Granite State Wheelman Safety and Education Committee
Mike Goumas, FGRT, Home Owner Abutter
Robbie Grady, Executive Director, Goffstown Main Street
Adam Hlasny, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
Larry Keniston, NHDOT Bureau of Rail and Transit Intermodal Facilities Engineer
Charles Martin, NH Rail Trails Author
Erik Paddleford, NHDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Technician
Dave Pierce, Goffstown Selectman, Rail Trail Steering Committee Chair, FGRT Vice President
David Preece, Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission
Brian Rose, Goffstown Planning & Zoning Administrator
Craig Tufts, Central New Hampshire Planning Commission
Lowell Von Ruden, President – FGRT
Kelly Von Ruden – FGRT

SUBJECT: [Goffstown Rail Trail Review](#)

NOTES ON MEETING:

On Monday September 10, 2012, Lowell Von Ruden, President of FGRT led the Review group along the route shown on the attached map. To document the group Review, this report was written according to the Stop and Segment number as depicted on the map and agenda attached. As the group traveled from stop to stop for site visits and meetings with various stakeholders, an enhanced understanding of transportation and recreational needs, interests, and concerns was developed. Observations and discussions were conducted at the 8 stops as identified on the agenda and map of the route. Other impromptu stops were added along the route when Review participants felt they were warranted.



Start Location – Parks and Recreation Building and Kiosk

The Goffstown Parks and Recreation Office located at 155 South Mast Road in Goffstown, NH served as the starting point for this Rail Trail review. The Parks and Recreation Office also serves as a primary location for trail users to park and access the Trail. A kiosk was constructed at this location as an Eagle Scout project to display relevant information for trail users.



Segment 1 - Participants began pedaling west and briefly stopped to observe a Recreational Trail Program(RTP) funded project that was completed in 2010 to address erosion and drainage issues in this area. The project included a culvert and fill valued at \$34,000.

Participants continued on the trail toward East Union St. The rail segment immediately across East Union St. is privately owned. In the long term, it would be desirable to acquire use of the segment. Currently, a bus company owns the property and uses all available space to park buses, including space previously occupied by the railway corridor. The trail current configuration requires cyclists to ride on East Union St. for approximately 0.3 miles before re-entering the trail and heading toward the old covered bridge abutment for Stop 1 as indicated on the Review map.

Stop 1 – West End of Trail

Ms. Robbie Grady, Executive Director of Goffstown Main Street, met the group to solicit input on way finding signage for the Factory Street crossing. The group commented that the Factory Street crossing would be a logical location for signage directing cyclists to downtown business locations. Members of the group indicated this would be a good location for a Kiosk similar to the one located at the Parks and Recreation facility.

Ms. Grady indicated that Goffstown Main Street was not looking at the installation of a kiosk and would use signage that would be in keeping with the Town’s own established branding effort for Town signage. Ms. Grady gave several reasons why a kiosk was not desirable option for Goffstown Main St. including cost to replace outdated information, propensity for people to use the kiosk to post private “Yard Sale” type signs, and the use of new technologies, such as quick response (QR) codes, that eliminate the need for any detailed business listings.

A suggestion was made to cut trees along the trail behind the store locations to improve the line of sight the Main St. Ms. Grady indicated that the area adjacent to the Trail in this area is prone to washouts and the trees provide slope stabilization. The trees also keep the trail view looking

good by providing green space as well as hide the businesses trash containers, mechanical systems, and other items stored behind the stores.

A bicycle & pedestrian bridge (to replace the historic covered railroad bridge that used to be in this location, but burned down 30 years ago) that would connect the trail directly to Main St. was envisioned. Ms. Grady discussed considerations that would need to be taken into account should such a bridge be installed at this location. Considerations include current views of and from the historic Lutten-Designed Main St. Bridge. Special Town events would require the bridge to be built with increased load limits since people would want to stand on the bridge during these times. Additionally, the bridge would allow trail users to bypass a small number of businesses located to the south of the Main St. Bridge. However, proper signage could be used to notify trail users of the location of the bypassed Main St. businesses.



Segment 2 - The Review group left Stop 1 by riding up Factory St. and then east along Route 114 to Barnard Park, which is the largest Town Park in Goffstown, located only 200 yards from the rail trail and serves as a destination for trail users. Once stopped at Barnard Park, Paula Bedard gave a safety briefing to the group about properly negotiating a roundabout prior to riding through the upcoming roundabout along route 114.

Stop 2 - Parks and Recreation Center

The Review group returned to the Parks and Recreation Center briefly and observed the \$37,000 2007 RTP funded project that improved the trail surface and addressed drainage issues in that area. Also of note is that Goffstown High School is approximately 300 yards from the trail at this location.

Segment 3 - The Review group headed east and briefly stopped at a bridge that was built by FGRT with a grant from PSNH. Continuing past the bridge, the group observed a culvert washout under the parallel trolley line in this area. Dave Pierce informed the group that NHDES owns a parcel of land in this area and that the potential for a future park exists.

Stop 3 – Mast Road / Route 114 Crossing

After continuing east on the trail, the Review group stopped at this crossing location and the proposed future crossing design was discussed. The following discussion and comments also apply to Stop 5, where the trail crosses back over Mast Road/ Route 114. The current TE project plans depict asphalt vehicle parking spaces at a new trailhead with the trail crossing at 90 degrees to Route 114. The crossings would be marked with signage and user activated Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs), but no painted crossing markings on Route 114 were in the current design. Larry Keniston commented that forcing the proposed crossing to exactly 90 degrees is unnecessary. A crossing closer to 70 or 80 degrees could have advantages, especially given the orientation of the westerly NH 114 crossing.

Lowell Von Ruden indicated that painted crossings are a normal part of RRFB crossing installations, and should be part of this crossing as well, but earlier indications from NHDOT were that they would not be in support of painted crossings unless the operating traffic speeds were under 35 mph. Larry Keniston believed that if town officials supported painted crossings and could demonstrate effective speed enforcement, NHDOT could support the town if there is a desire to paint and maintain these crossings.

The group inquired about the possibility of lowering the speed limit on this stretch of road from 40 mph to 30 or 35 mph or potentially extending the school zone beacon and signage to east of the proposed crossing. Currently, there is a school zone beacon located approximately 650 feet west of this proposed crossing location. The town urban compact line, where the speed limit drops to 30 mph is 1,100 feet further west of the school zone.



Mast Road Crossing Heading East

Segment 4 - After crossing Route 114, the Review group continued east toward Tatro Drive and the Shell Fueling Station for Stop 4.

Stop 4 – Shell Easement

Dave Pierce informed the group of the existing easement to the rear of the Shell Station. The natural inclination of trail users coming from the east toward the Shell Station is to travel straight through the parking lot/fueling area along the front of the Shell Station parcel and regain the trail on the opposite side of the property. The intended route is around the rear of the Shell Station.

Future changes to this area will include signage, and striping (for example, painted lines, arrows and a “bicycle logo” stamp painted on the road), to direct trail users to make a right turn onto Tatro Drive then make a left turn onto the yet to be completed trail along the existing easement at the rear of the Shell Station.



Rear of Shell Station (Town Easement)

Segment 5 - The Review group continued through the back parking area of the Shell Station and on the trail towards Magoo’s Drive-In restaurant and Pro Landscape Supply. The group stopped at this location and discussed how Magoo’s Drive-In can become a destination for trail users. Pro Landscape supply, through a cooperative effort with the town, has used this section of trail as a showcase for their landscape products by paving the trail with stone pavers. This is an example of how a trail can be beneficial to abutters.

Matt Shaw, of Pro Landscape Supply told the group that using his products to pave and landscape this section of trail has worked out very well, and he would like to potentially expand and pave more of trail along the business property frontage in the future.



Magoo's Drive-In and Landscaped Trail

Stop 5 - Mast Road/ Route 114 Crossing

The group briefly discussed the skewed crossing back over Mast Road. A similar crossing realignment and signage with RRFBs is also proposed here as part of the current Transportation Enhancement (TE) project.

Segment 6 - The group continued east on Route 114 and took a left onto Henry Bridge Road then turned left onto the trail heading west to observe the location of a former rail road trestle over Old Henry Bridge Road, which is now overgrown with vegetation and forested. Dave Peirce informed the group that the Old Henry Bridge Road crossing will be filled in to bring the area of the former trestle up to grade with the rest of the trail and allow for continuous use of the trail through this section. Funding for this upgrade, which is currently in the design phase, comes from the current TE grant.

Lowell Von Ruden indicated that people do use Old Henry Road as a walking path/ trail to cut between Route 114 and Henry Bridge Road and when the area is back filled, it would be desirable to have some type of accommodation for those that use Old Henry Road for that purpose. Bill Fisk asked about the possibility of adding a “critter crossing” under the fill. A small culvert would be required in order to drain the minimal runoff area south of the fill, but the culvert should be large enough to be cleaned out as needed.



Former Rail Trestle Over Old Henry Bridge Road

The group headed east from the former trestle location toward Henry Bridge Road. The Town crossing at this location will include painted markings and signage. Henry Bridge road provides access to the northern side of the Piscataquog River.

Stop 6 - Hillsborough County Complex

Continuing on from the Henry Bridge Road Crossing, the Review group stopped at the Hillsborough County Complex. This is a primary location to access the trail and the river as well as a destination for trail users using services at the county complex, which include the district court, UNH Cooperative Extension, Sheriff, and others. The parking area is currently marked as public, but not advertised as trail parking. With added signage to indicate trail access as well as public parking, this area could become a larger and more primary trail access point.



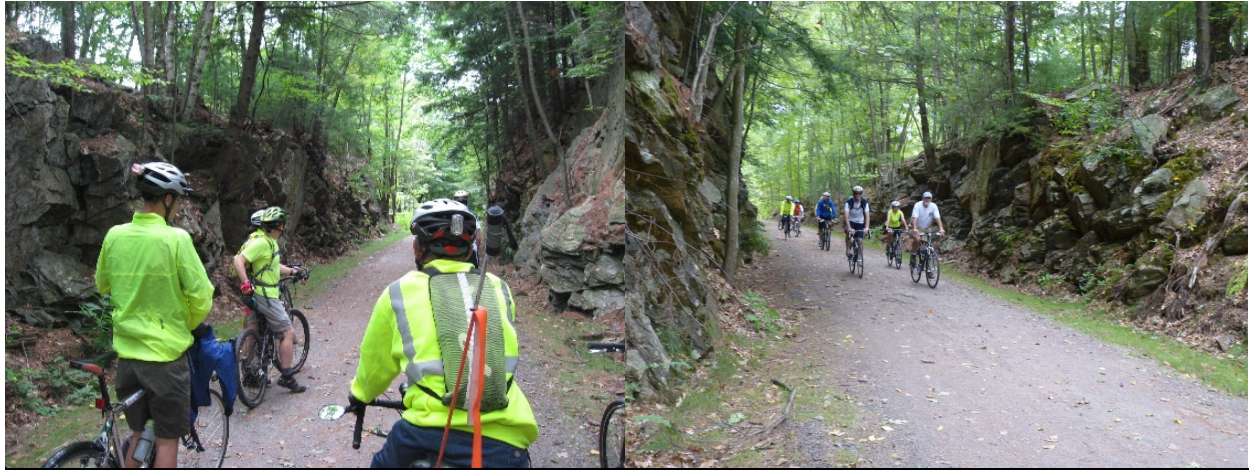
Rear of Women's Prison



Rear of County Complex Access Road

Segment 7 - Departing from the Hillsborough County complex, the group continued east, crossing Danis Park Rd. A portion of this segment of trail is in need of work to repair a slope

failure and fallen culvert stones. The following trail section crossing Morgan Circle, and continuing to Lynchville Park Rd. has been improved under a 2011 RTP funded project. Further improvements to these intersections include vehicle-blocking steel bollards, which have already been purchased. Another portion of this segment of trail that travels through a rock cut has been improved with under-drain and an upgraded trail surface to alleviate previous drainage issues, also under the RTP funded project.



Rock Cut With Drainage and Trail Surface Upgrades

Stop 7 – Moose Club Park Road

The Moose Club Park Road trailhead area currently includes an informational kiosk built as an Eagle Scout project, with future improvements in a 2012 RTP funded project to include improved drainage, grading, vehicle-blocking bollards, and four improved vehicle parking spaces. A condominium development is planned for the area and the developer, Anagnost Realty & Development, will contribute \$8,000 towards the proposed trailhead improvements. With the proposed improvements, the Moose Club Park Road trailhead should become more of a destination for trail users, as a way for trail users to access the Pinardville business district, and as a convenient trail access point.



Moose Club Park Kiosk



Moose Club Park Trailhead

Segment 8 - From the Moose Club Park trailhead the Review group continued east towards the Sarette Recreational Complex, which serves as both a destination for trail users and a place where trail users can park to access the trail. This location is also another way for trail users to access the Pinardville business district. Access was improved to Sarette field from the trail in 2010 through a RTP funded project. The project included fencing to prevent ATV users from accessing the complex area and finishing the last one hundred yards of trail surface to the Manchester city line. The fencing has narrow access points for pedestrians and requires cyclists to dismount and walk their bicycles through the fence opening. The Review group continued to the east towards the Piscataquog River Trestle, approximately one-quarter mile past the Manchester city line on the Manchester Piscataquog Trail.

The trestle is currently fenced off from public use, but once replaced will continue the Piscataquog Trail connection into downtown Manchester. A new pedestrian bridge is scheduled for installation at the trestle location sometime in 2013, according to Jessica Chambers of the Manchester Parks and Recreation Department.



Currently, cyclists need to use the Biron Bridge over the Piscataquog River to regain the trail behind the West Side Arena to continue into Manchester via the Piscataquog Trail. Alternatively, trail users can take a trail that skirts the western bank of the river adjacent to the trestle that intersects with the pedestrian bridge over the river connecting to the West Side Arena property and ultimately the Piscataquog trail. This trail is currently only suitable for travel on foot and by experienced mountain bikers since the trail is narrow and relatively rough for bicycles.

Segment 9 – The Review group split with a portion of the group taking the Biron Bridge Route and the other group taking the “river bank trail” to the pedestrian bridge and to the West Side Arena.



**Trail on Western Bank of Piscataquog
Biron Bridge in Background**



Pedestrian Bridge Over Piscataquog

Segment 10 - The group met back up behind the West side arena and continued into Manchester eventually riding over the Hands Across the Merrimack River Bridge. The group stopped briefly to discuss possible signage that could be installed on the eastern end of the bridge that would inform trail users of the distance to various points of interest along the trail in Goffstown. The group then continued on the Manchester Heritage trail to Fisher Cats Park.



Hand Across the Merrimack Bridge

Stop 8 – Fisher Cats Park

Peter Capano and Jessica Chambers discussed the need to address this terminus of the Manchester Heritage trail, since the trail currently terminates in the parking lot in front of Fisher Cats Stadium, with no obvious direction for trail users unfamiliar with the area to go. To help trail users negotiate the parking lot, especially when the lot is full during game time, trail signage, painted lines, arrows, and/ or a “bicycle logo” stamp on the asphalt to direct bicyclists through the parking lot and on to the main road and local points of interest are needed.

During this stop and discussion, Paula Bedard, who frequently commutes to and from work through this area commented on the lack of signage for cyclist to get safely through the parking lot and noted the area is “very dangerous, especially during game time”. She agreed that directional signage and painted markings on the asphalt would be beneficial. Signage and asphalt markings could also serve to caution drivers that cyclists may be in the area.

There was also some discussion about continuing the trail along the river and even having the trail go through some of the old mill buildings along the Merrimack River. The replacement of the Piscataquog trestle bridge was further discussed.



Fisher Cats Stadium Parking Area

The group left the parking area and headed back southwest along the Manchester Heritage Trail and stopped in front of the Elliot at Rivers Edge medical facility property, located approximately ¼ mile from the Hands Across the Merrimack Bridge. Between the Elliot at Rivers Edge medical facility and the Heritage Trail is City owned property, which is currently fenced off. Bob MacKenzie, of Manchester Moves, talked about how this property could potentially be a link between the trail and the Elliot facility as well as other points of interest in the City of Manchester.

The group continued south along the Manchester Heritage Trail to its end on Sundial Ave. Once on Sundial Ave., the group continued onto Dunbar St., then to Riverdale St. and continued to its end before turning around for the return trip back to the day’s starting location, at the Goffstown Parks and Recreation Office.

Submitted by

\s\ Erik H. Paddleford

With assistance from:

Paula Bedard
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cc (email):

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